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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 005598

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/29/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: PUTIN AND UNITED RUSSIA DOMINATE MEDIA IN RUN UP  
TO DUMA ELECTIONS

REF: MOSCOW 5584 Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns for reason 1.4 (d)

1. (C) Summary. All one has to do is watch the national nightly news to see that President Putin, his administration, and United Russia garner The Facts -----

2. (SBU) Statistics of print and broadcast coverage devoted to political parties and politicians during the election campaign have been produc

3. (SBU) United Russia also dominated the national television airwaves; the opposition parties Union of Right Forces (SPS) and Yabloko each re

4. (U) According to CJES statistics, November differed slightly from October, as some national networks aired news about parties other than Ur

5. (SBU) The political discussion on the internet has been more open, but Transparency International Russia's Yelena Panfilova claims that par Kremlin Influence MOSCOW 00005598 002 OF 003 -----

6. (C) United Russia benefited from the president's control of the government-owned media, particularly TV channels First Channel and RTR. NTV

7. (C) First Channel's popular anchor Vladimir Pozner was forthcoming in his assessment of why the television coverage is so skewed. He said t

8. (C) The Russian Government is also forcing the state-run channels to air political advertising during prime viewing hours. According to NTV Self-Censorship -----

9. (C) Not all broadcast outlets admitted to phone calls and Kremlin instructions, and some suggested that such tactics are not necessary. TV

10. (C) Aleksey Venediktov, Editor-in-chief of the editorially independent radio station Ekho Moskvyy, told us the Kremlin complained about Ekho Does it Matter? ----- MOSCOW 00005598 003 OF 003

11. (C) Media insiders are divided about whether any of this matters. NTV's Orlov told us it wouldn't matter if more coverage was given to sme

12. (C) Those we spoke with almost universally agreed that the media environment will get worse before the presidential elections in March, ye